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 INFO RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 7486  
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EXDIS

MILITARY ADDRESSEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOR ACDA/ACTING DIRECTOR GEORGE; SHAPE/FOR GEN ROGERS  
 AND PULAD

USSTART

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
 TAGS: PARM, START  
 SUBJECT: START: ASSESSMENT AT MID-ROUND  
 1. THIS IS START III-051. SECRET ENTIRE TEXT.

1A. THE US START DELEGATION RECOGNIZES THAT WASHINGTON  
 IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING KEY ASPECTS OF THE US START  
 PROPOSAL AND THEREFORE BELIEVES IT COULD BE USEFUL TO

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MID-ROUND US Review  
 OF STATUS

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PROVIDE SOME THOUGHTS ON WHERE WE STAND IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THE MIDDLE OF ROUND THREE.

2. WHILE OBVIOUSLY WE CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME SOVIET SURPRISES DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE ROUND, THE PATTERN OF SOVIET BEHAVIOR SEEMS FAIRLY WELL ESTABLISHED. WITH RESPECT TO THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL, THE SOVIETS HAVE INTRODUCED A NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL, RELATIVELY MINOR ELEMENTS IN THE FORM OF DRAFT TREATY PROVISIONS, BUT CONTINUE TO STONEWALL ON THE CRITICAL GAPS IN THEIR POSITION. THE ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS (E.G., "NEW TYPES" PROVISION, BAN ON NEW TYPES OF HEAVY ICBMS, BAN ON HEAVY SLBMS, WARHEAD WEIGHT CONSTRAINTS) CONTAIN NO SURPRISES, HAVING BEEN LIFTED VIRTUALLY INTACT FROM SALT II. MOREOVER, THERE IS A GAP IN ONE OF THOSE ELEMENTS -- THE CUT-OFF DATE FOR "NEW TYPES."

3. THE SOVIETS REMAIN SILENT ON THEIR NUCLEAR WEAPONS AGGREGATE, MIRVED SDV SUB-LIMIT, AND HEAVY ICBM SUB-LIMIT. IT SEEMS THAT THEIR WEAPONS AGGREGATE (WHICH WOULD INCLUDE ALL BOMBER WEAPONS) WILL BE MUCH HIGHER THAN OUR PROPOSAL FOR 5000 BALLISTIC MISSILE WARHEADS, PERHAPS BETWEEN 7000 AND 11,000. THUS, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THEIR PROPOSED AGGREGATE WOULD INVOLVE REDUCTIONS FROM CURRENT LEVELS OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS. PRESUMABLY, ONE REASON FOR THEIR RELUCTANCE TO TABLE A NUMBER IS A CONCERN THAT, IF IT SHOULD BECOME COMPARED PUBLICLY WITH OUR 5000 FIGURE BEFORE THEY CAN PIN A HIGH CRUISE MISSILE FIGURE ON THE US, THEY WOULD COME OFF SECOND BEST.

4. THE SOVIETS HAVE SPENT MUCH LESS TIME SELLING THEIR PROPOSAL THAN CRITICIZING OURS. IN FACT, THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR PROPOSAL SEEMS TO HAVE HARDENED. THEY ATTACK IT IN THE STRONGEST TERMS AS DESIGNED TO DESTROY SOVIET STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES WITHOUT AFFECTING US PROGRAMS. WHILE THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT EXPLICITLY RANKED THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT OUR PROPOSAL, THIS ROUND THEY HAVE ZEROED IN ON THE ELEMENTS (E.G., THE 210/110 COLLATERAL CONSTRAINTS, THE PHASE II BAN ON HEAVIES) THAT REQUIRE WHAT THEY ARGUE WOULD BE A RAPID, EXPENSIVE LARGE-SCALE RESTRUCTURING OF THEIR ICBM FORCE. IN ADDITION, THE SOVIETS HAVE CONTINUED TO ARGUE THAT THROW-WEIGHT LIMITS ARE UNNECESSARY AND UNDESIRABLE.

5. TO A LARGE EXTENT, OF COURSE, SOVIET ARGUMENTS ABOUT

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THE "EMASCULATION" OF THEIR ICBM FORCE ARE EXAGGERATED AND DISINGENUOUS. AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT IN PLENARY AND IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, THE SOVIETS HAVE FORCE MODERNIZATION PLANS OF THEIR OWN THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO MEET OUR PROPOSED LIMITS. BUT CLEARLY, THEIR VIEWS ON RESULTING FORCE STRUCTURES AND METHODS OF ACHIEVING THEM DIFFER RADICALLY FROM OURS. WHILE THEY WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO HOLD ON TO THEIR SS-18S, WE WOULD REQUIRE THAT THEY BE PHASED OUT. ALSO THEY WOULD LIKE TO RETAIN A HIGHER PROPORTION OF STRATEGIC FORCES IN ICBM WARHEADS THAN OUR PROPOSAL WOULD PERMIT. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE SOVIETS, HAVING INVESTED MASSIVELY IN ICBM MODERNIZATION DURING THE 1970S, WOULD HAVE STRONG OBJECTIONS TO THE EXPENSE AND SCOPE OF RESTRUCTURING WE ARE PROPOSING. WE BELIEVE THAT WHILE THE SOVIETS ARE EXAGGERATING THE IMPACT OF OUR PROPOSAL ON THEIR FORCES, NEVERTHELESS THE QUESTION OF ICBM FORCE RESTRUCTURING APPEARS TO BE THEIR CENTRAL PREOCCUPATION AND ONE WE WILL HAVE TO ADDRESS SOONER OR LATER.

6. THE SOVIET DELEGATION THIS ROUND HAS CONTINUED TO BE CRITICAL OF HOW WE PROPOSE TO HANDLE HEAVY BOMBERS AND CRUISE MISSILES. THEY HAVE ALSO CRITICIZED OUR APPROACH TO PHASING, WHICH THEY VIEW AS A WAY TO REDUCE THEIR BALLISTIC MISSILE FORCE WHILE WE BUILD UP OUR CRUISE MISSILE LEVELS. THEY OPPOSE THE IDEA OF A SEPARATE, EQUAL CEILING ON BOMBERS, INSISTING THAT BACKFIRE BE EXCLUDED AND ARGUING THAT, WITH IT EXCLUDED, THEY COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT DEPLOY THE SAME NUMBER AS THE US. ON ALCMS, THE SOVIETS CLAIM WE HAVE NOT DONE ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT

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THIS ROUND. THEY SAY THAT THEY ALWAYS EXPECTED US TO ACCEPT ALCM LIMITS, AND THAT THEY ASSUMED THAT WHATEVER NUMBERS WE EVENTUALLY PROPOSE WILL ACCOMMODATE OUR PROGRAMS. (THEY EITHER TALK ABOUT THE FIGURE 4000 OR MULTIPLY 400 BY 28 TO GET OVER 11,000, A NUMBER THEY KNOW IS UNREALISTIC.) THE SOVIETS KNOW THAT AN ALCM BAN IS NOT IN THE CARDS. BUT THEY ALSO KNOW THAT, AS LONG AS THE LOADING CAPACITIES OF SOVIET BOMBERS ARE LOWER THAN OURS, AN EQUAL LOADING LIMIT AT THE LEVELS WE WOULD PROPOSE WOULD GIVE US

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AN ADVANTAGE. WE CAN THEREFORE EXPECT THEM TO CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR BOTH A LAUNCHER/BOMBER AGGREGATE AND A MISSILE RV/BOMBER WEAPONS AGGREGATE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY WOULD SETTLE FOR THE FORMER (AND THUS ALLOW US TO COUNT ALCMS SEPARATELY FROM AND MORE PERMISSIVELY THAN MISSILE RVs), BUT IN THAT EVENT THEY WOULD PROBABLY EXPECT A COMPENSATING ASYMMETRY (E.G., IN THROW-WEIGHT OR EXCLUSION OF BACKFIRE).

7. THE TONE OF SOVIET PLENARY STATEMENTS AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS HAS BEEN NEGATIVE, OFTEN HARSH AND SARCASTIC. SIGNALING THIS HARDENED ATTITUDE, THE SOVIETS ANNOUNCED AT THE OPENING PLENARY, WITHOUT WAITING TO HEAR WHAT WE HAD TO SAY, THAT THE TALKS WERE STALEMATED. FREQUENTLY THEY DO NOT BOTHER TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE HAVE EVEN MADE AN EFFORT TO REBUT THEIR ARGUMENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER OUR DETAILED STATEMENT DEMONSTRATING THE FEASIBILITY OF MEETING OUR PROPOSED LIMITS WITHOUT ABNORMAL STRAIN, THEY RETURNED IN A SUBSEQUENT PLENARY -- WITH HARDLY A CHANGE IN WORDING -- TO THEIR ORIGINAL "EMASCULATION" CHARGE. THE OVERALL SOVIET APPROACH HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO AVOID THE PERCEPTION OF PROGRESS THAT COULD BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE U.S.

8. IN SUM, SOVIET BEHAVIOR THIS ROUND -- THE HARSH TONE, THE FAILURE TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN PROPOSAL IN A TRULY MEANINGFUL WAY, THE DISMISSIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR PROPOSAL -- HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO SEND US A STARK MESSAGE: THAT WE HAVE COME TO A DEAD END AND THE ONLY WAY OUT IS FOR US TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL ADJUSTMENTS IN OUR POSITION. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THIS SOVIET STONEWALLING.

-- IN PART, IT CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE GREATER URGENCY THE SOVIETS ATTACH TO INF AT THIS JUNCTURE AND TO THE FACT THAT THEY CONTINUE TO CONDITION THEIR START PROPOSAL ON THE OUTCOME OF INF.

-- IN PART, IT IS TACTICAL, DESIGNED TO STIMULATE SECOND THOUGHTS WITHIN THE USG AND THE WEST IN GENERAL ABOUT THE WISDOM OF THE U.S. APPROACH.

-- IN PART, THE SOVIETS MAY BE HOLDING BACK AND ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL TRENDS IN THE US, SUCH AS THE FREEZE MOVEMENT AND EARLY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE 1984 ELECTION

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CAMPAIGN.

-- IN PART, THE SOVIET SUCCESSION HAS PROBABLY NOT PROCEEDED TO THE POINT WHERE THE NEW LEADERSHIP WOULD BE ABLE OR WILLING TO TAKE SIGNIFICANT STEPS IN THIS AREA.

-- BUT IN PART, SOVIET BEHAVIOR REFLECTS THEIR ASSESSMENT THAT OUR PROPOSAL IS DESIGNED NOT TO PROMOTE STRATEGIC STABILITY BUT TO OBTAIN STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES FOR THE US. TO THE DEGREE THAT THIS ASSESSMENT IS DOMINANT WITHIN THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, WE WOULD EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO CONTINUE DISMISSING OUR PROPOSAL RATHER THAN TO LOOK FOR WAYS IN WHICH OUR FRAMEWORK COULD BE USED TO FIT MORE CLOSELY WHAT THE SOVIETS CONSIDER TO BE THEIR BASIC STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS.

9. WE RECOGNIZE, OF COURSE, THAT A WIDE RANGE OF FACTORS WILL NEED TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE COURSE OF WASHINGTON'S CURRENT REVIEW OF OUR POSITION (E.G., THE IMPACT OF THE SCOWCROFT PANEL'S FINDINGS). BUT WE BELIEVE THAT AS WASHINGTON CONSIDERS THE ISSUES ON ITS START AGENDA (E.G., PHASING, QUESTION OF A MISSILE/ BOMBER AGGREGATE, SLCM, ETC.), IT SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT A KEY NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVE OVER THE COMING MONTHS SHOULD BE TO DRAW THE SOVIETS INTO OUR NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK. IN THIS CONNECTION, WHILE PROMPT DECISIONS ON OTHER PENDING ISSUES ARE IMPORTANT, WE SHOULD EXPLORE WAYS BY WHICH THE QUESTION OF ICBM RESTRUCTURING CAN BE ADDRESSED IN A MANNER THAT WOULD IN FACT FACILITATE OUR CURRENT GOAL OF SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCING THE SIZE AND CAPABILITY OF ICBM FORCES.

10. IN ADDITION TO SEEKING TO DRAW THE SOVIETS INTO OUR NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK, A SECOND KEY OBJECTIVE IN THE COMING MONTHS SHOULD BE TO COUNTER SOVIET PROPAGANDA THAT IT IS THE US WHICH IS CAUSING AN IMPASSE IN START. ANDROPOV FIRED THE FIRST SHOTS IN THIS PROPAGANDA WAR IN HIS PUBLIC COMMENTS OF DECEMBER AND JANUARY, AND A NUMBER OF LESSER OFFICIALS HAVE FOLLOWED SUIT. ON

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FEBRUARY 23 GROMYKO IN ANOTHER "INTERVIEW" IN PRAVDA

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BLAMED THE US FOR A NEGOTIATING STANDSTILL IN GENEVA. WHILE HIS CRITICISM WAS LARGELY AIMED AT INF, HE ALSO INCLUDED THE START NEGOTIATIONS. THESE SKIRMISHES COULD WELL DEVELOP INTO A FULL-SCALE SOVIET PROPAGANDA BLITZ NOW THAT THE GERMAN ELECTIONS ARE OVER. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT CERTAIN POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE SOVIET DELEGATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS (E.G., FREEZE, CRUISE MISSILE DEPLOYMENT BAN AND TABLING OF TREATY PROVISIONS) MAY BE DESIGNED, AT LEAST IN PART, TO GIVE THE SOVIETS THE HIGHER GROUND IN THE EVENT OF A PUBLIC DEBATE.

11. WE BELIEVE THAT SENIOR US OFFICIALS SHOULD ONCE AGAIN, AND REPEATEDLY, REJECT THE ANDROPOV/GROMYKO ALLEGATIONS. IF, AS WE BELIEVE, SOVIET OFFICIALS REPEAT THEIR ALLEGATIONS, US OFFICIALS SHOULD RESPOND IMMEDIATELY AND RESOLUTELY. THE MESSAGE SHOULD BE THAT THE SOVIETS, AND NOT THE US, HAVE BEEN INTRANSIGENT AND STALLING IN GENEVA. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC AFFAIRS EFFORTS GEARED TO FURTHERING OUR INF OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE BROADENED TO INCLUDE START ISSUES.

RONNY

END OF MESSAGE

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